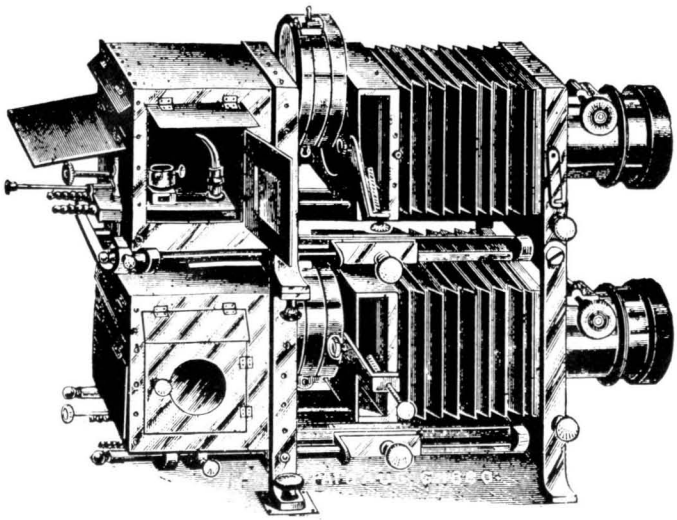
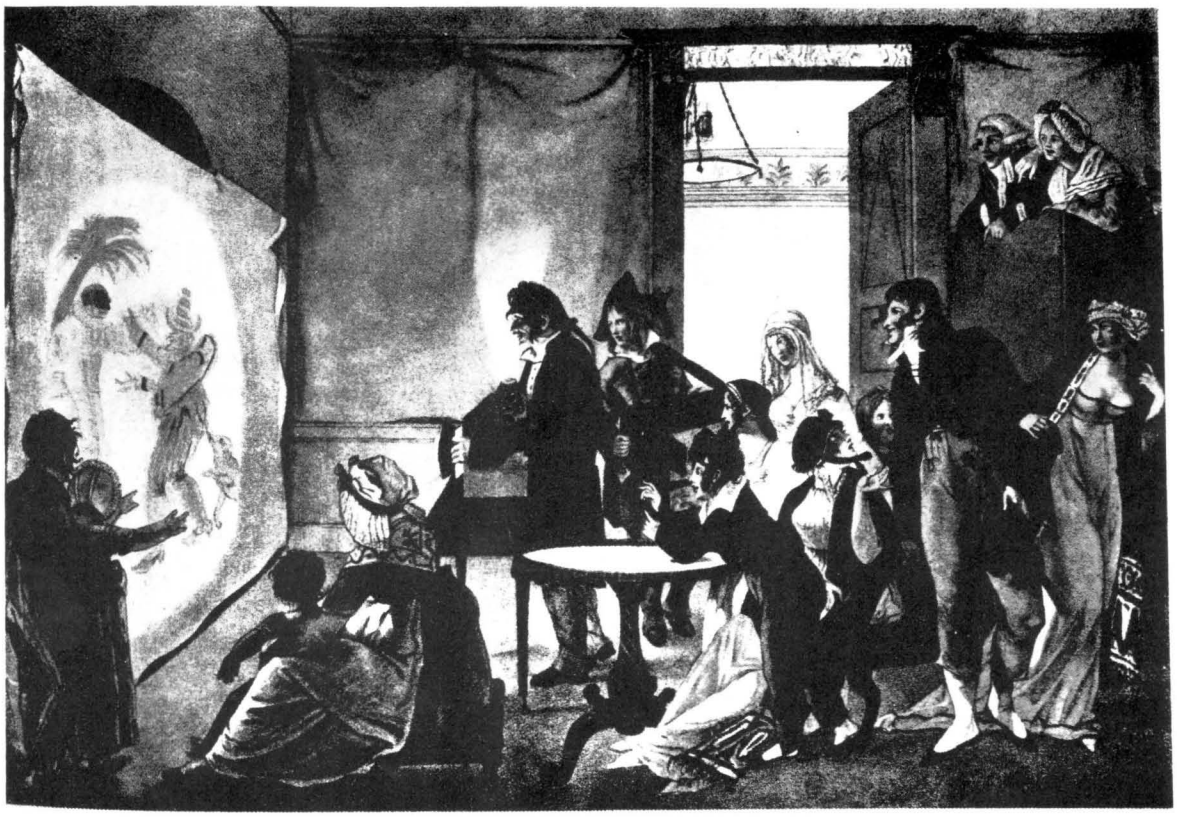
THE MAGIC LANTERN BULLETIN

VOL.VI, NO. 2
DECEMBER, 1984



THE IMPROVED "BOSTON IDEAL."



I have this nightmare. All across the United States and in a fist-and-a-half-full of other countries men and women from all walks of life are growing anxious. Happily married men growl at their wives. Women grow short with their children. Working people pick fights with their bosses. Each waits patiently for the postman or rushes home to check the mailbox...only to be disappointed. "Mama," query small children, "has it arrived yet?" "No," answer scores of mothers, wiping away silent tears, "perhaps tomorrow." The ultimate philosophical question of our decade ("Where's the Beef?!?") is dispatched to whatever netherworld is reserved for tired slogans. A new challenge has replaced it: WHERE'S THE BULLETIN?!?

I wake up slowly, groggy from sleep but determined that today will be the day. I drag myself to the typewriter. "Just begin," I prod myself. "The hardest part is the first sentence." My fingers rest tentatively on the keyboard. I begin to type. "I have this nightmare..."

In answer to numerous questions raised during the past several months: Yes, the BULLETIN is very much alive. Without going into a long song and dance, your editor has been working extraordinarily hard this year in order to get a new business venture off the ground. Happy to report, the business is going well. Sad to report, it takes up almost all my time and hence a serious delay in the publication of this edition of the BULLETIN.

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is published quarterly by the Magic Lantern Society of the U.S. and Canada. Annual dues are $10.

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I must inform you all that I don't anticipate my continuing as editor of the BULLETIN for much longer. I have enjoyed it greatly during the past two years but must have the time to devote to other projects now. I've talked with Dick and Terry about my decision and we are all three currently investigating other options. We should have a formal announcement ready by the next issue. Until then it's business as usual.

Having gotten one apology off my chest, it's time for another. Sifting through my back copies of the BULLETIN several months ago, I noticed that our numeration went awry several issues back. The last correctly numbered BULLETIN was Volume V, #3 (September, 1983). The following issue (with the holiday theme and the lead article on magic lantern illuminants) should have been Volume V, #4, December, 1983. The issue preceding the one you are now holding should have been Volume VI, #1, March, 1984. When referring to these issues in future articles we will use the correct numeration and suggest that you correct your own copies if you keep them on file.

We hope this edition has been worth the wait. It features an article by Nancy Bergh on researching old city directories, a reprint of a delightful magic lantern essay from the journal of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the latest additions to Bob Woodward's magic lantern bibliography and the regular assortment of news and views from ML Society members.

Though the Second Magic Lantern Conference is history, we'll not mention it in this issue except to say that it received rave reviews from all who attended. A full report will appear in the next MAGIC LANTERN BULLETIN and will include reports on the presentations, a full evaluation of the auction, and other convention notes. Further, the next issue will feature a mysterious article from the Old Projectionist, a biography of West-coast member and animation-queen Ruth Hayes, a pre-cinema ABC, and a special contest for Society members. Perhaps best of all, we'll unveil an ambitious new publishing project for the Magic Lantern Society. The next BULLETIN should appear by the end of January; all articles should be in my hands by December 30. Let me wish you all a very happy Holiday season and the very best of health and luck in the New Year.

SLEUTHING IN THE CITY DIRECTORIES, or THE CASE OF THE UNTAPPED SOURCES

By Nancy Bergh

In a local library or historical society reading room, the magic lantern and slide collector can investigate many resources--published or manuscript--which throw light on the history of a magic lantern or slide manufacturing concern or perhaps an individual lanternist. One of these sources, the city directory, is a treasure house of information. Following a particular person or business from year to year through the pages of the city directory, the lantern detective may learn such basic information about the history of the firm as company names, addresses, business mangers, etc. This research base may provide clues for dating materials and lead to other avenues of investigation.

City directories were published for most of the major cities in the United States and Canada in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Each is a useful compendium of information describing the city and its people. The title page of the 1881-82 city directory for St. Paul, Minnesota, provides a very good idea of what is in store for the reader:

> ...an alphabetically arranged list of business firms and private citizens --a classified list of all trades, professions and pursuits--a miscellaneous directory, city and county officers, terms of court, public and private schools, churches, banks, incorporated institutions, secret and benevolent societies, etc.

Leafing through the pages or cranking the handle of the microfilm reader to study the directory in search of, for example, your favorite local slide manufacturer is interesting, but watch out! One is easily sidetracked!

For instance, the idea for this piece on SLEUTHING IN THE CITY DIRECTORIES came to me while I was searching a microfilm copy of the Minneapolis City Directory about information on the maker of an artifact I was cataloging as part of my job as a museum cataloger at the Minnesota Historical Society. In the 1894-95 edition, the man I was tracking changed jobs, according to the listing in the directory, and was employed as a cabinet maker. So I turned to the classified section to check out his employer under "Cabinet Makers," and--EUREKA!--the same page offered the subject heading "Calcium Lights" and a half-page advertisement for The Twin City Calcium Light Co. This company, the ad informed me, furnished colored calcium lights, had "foreign or domestic stereopticons" for sale, and provided "Stereopticon Views made to order!"

My interest piqued, I soon was coming in early to spend a half hour before work poring through the city directories in search of more magic lantern references. I found myself launching out on research tangents and so decided to limit my search this time to two Minneapolis firms: The Twin City Calcium Light Company and C.A. Hoffman, manufacturing optician.

C.A. (Charles A.) Hoffman made his first appearance in the Minneapolis city directories in the 1883-84 edition. In an advertisement illustrated by drawings of spectacles and field glasses, he claimed to be the "only exclusive optical business in the city." However, the extent of his inventory would soon be amplified. By the next year's edition, he had moved to a better office location and the

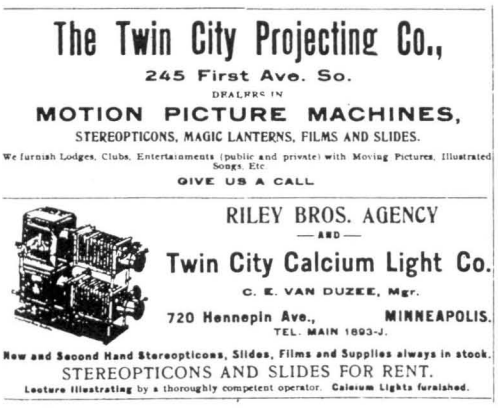
OPEN HERE

1885-86 directory boasted a two-page ad with elaborate graphics which promoted not only the manufacture and sale of fine lenses but also prominently advertised the fact that C.A. Hoffman was an "IMPORTER AND DEALER IN OPTICAL AND MATHEMATICAL INSTRUMENTS" including "MAGIC LANTERNS AND STEREOPTICONS." In 1887-88 C.A. Hoffman chose what appears to have been a good quality magic lantern to illustrate his full-page ad. Apparently the demand for "photographic instruments and stock" was on the rise; Hoffman even advertised "Free Dark Room for use of Amateurs."

In 1901 Hoffman found a need to change his listing in the directory; in bold type the entry read "HOFFMAN (THE OPTICIAN) CHARLES A..." The parenthetical notation was apparently added to distinguish our Hoffman from the next entry which read "HOFFMAN, CHARLES A, SALOON..."

The consistency of Hoffman entries in the city directories from 1883 to 1920 seems to indicate a steady and prosperous business as "Wholesale Optician and (seller of) Photographic Supplies." As late as 1902 the firm was advertising itself as "The Only Manufacturers of Fine Spectacles, Eye Glasses and Lenses in the Northwest." By 1911 Charles A. Hoffman had brought in a partner (probably a relative), Arthur C. Hoffman. Arthur served as secretary and treasurer of the C.A. Hoffman Company until 1918, when he was listed as President and Treasurer. In 1920 there was no individual listing for Charles A. Hoffman but his firm continued to operate under the same name. (My next step here perhaps should be to check the newspapers for obituaries and the nineteenth-century census records for more information about the family and the fate of C.A. Hoffman.)

Checking listings for one of Hoffman's competitors in the magic lantern line required a little more digging. The Twin City Calcium Light Co. managed by E.R. (Elgin R.) Shepard, was first listed in the 1894-95 Minneapolis city directory. The firm continued for several years under Shepard's management. In the 1897 directory I spied a new listing for "RILEY BROTHERS, C.E. Van Duzee agt" in the classified section under the heading "Stereopticons and Supplies." A mere two years later, both the Riley Brothers agency and the Twin City Calcium Light Co. came under the Charles E. Van Duzee's management, and Elgin Shepard was listed as the proprietor of a "Home Studio."


The Twin City Projecting Co.,
245 First Ave. So.
DEALERS IN
MOTION PICTURE MACHINES,
STEREOPTICONS, MAGIC LANTERNS, FILMS AND SLIDES.
We furnish Lodges, Clubs, Entertainments (public and private) with Moving Pictures, Illustrated Songs Etc
GIVE US A CALL
RILEY BROS. AGENCY
—AND—
Twin City Calcium Light Co.
C. E. VAN DUZEE, Mgr.
720 Hennepin Ave., MINNEAPOLIS.
TEL. MAIN 1893-J.
New and Second Hand Stereopticons, Slides, Films and Supplies always in stock.
STEREOPTICONS AND SLIDES FOR RENT.
Lecture Illustrating by a thoroughly competent operator. Calcium Lights furnished.

In 1901 the firm's name changed slightly--perhaps in recognition of a growing demand for projection equipment--to The Twin City Calcium and Stereopticon Co. Fifteen years later, in 1916, "Stereopticon" had been dropped from the name, which was back to "The Twin City Calcium Light Co." which sold stereopticon supplies. The firm continued in business under that name until 1925, when it became the Twin City Calcium & Supply Co. In the 1920's the company came under the management of Walter A. Smith and was located at 706 First Avenue No. The Twin City Calcium & Supply Co. did not show up in the 1928 Minneapolis city directory. However, in the classified section under

"Stereopticons and Supplies," Walter Smith was still listed--this time as the manager of the "Peerless Slide Co." at the same address, 706 First Avenue No. Another clue to follow up someday!

As I checked the listings from year to year for these two firms, I noted several other slide and lantern references--names such as the Twin City Projecting Co. (R. Farris Manager) in 1899, and an 1897 listing for Richards and Birch, sellers of "Stereopticons and Views" and "Employment Agents." So I have plenty of more leads to follow up just in this one city.

Perhaps doing such research might seem tedious or even dull to some, but I find it exciting. While collecting and studying the slides and lanterns is in itself fascinating, for me, at least, the story of the objects still needs to be "fleshed out" with information about the people who made, sold, bought and used them. The city directories can be a useful first step in finding such information. And once the basic facts about the person or company are established, the collections of libraries and archives will present other exciting opportunities to the researcher who comes equipped with imagination, patience and determination to compete with the genealogists for the microfilm readers! Perhaps old editions of the local newspapers ran advertisements for slides and lanterns, or announcements of lantern slide entertainments at clubs or theaters. There might be found descriptions of such entertainments in diaries which are housed in the archives of an historical society, and the library may hold copies of old catalogs of slides and optical equipment to help date that odd-looking lantern you found at an estate sale five years ago. The possibilities--even on the home front--are great, so if the "magic" of throwing more light on the history of your magic lanterns and slides appeals to you and you have yet to tap the resources of your local libraries and historical societies--dig in! It's fun.

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CONFESSIONS OF A MAGIC LANTERN MAESTRO
By Edwards Park

(Note: This article is reprinted with permission from the August 1984 issue of Historic Preservation, the bimonthly magazine of the National Trust for Historic Prservation.)

Among other things, my father used to lecture on clipper ships. He had studied the golden era of sail, the 1840's and 50's, when Donald McKay designed one sharp-lined clipper after another, and he knew their stories as if he had shipped out on them: Great Republic, Sovereign of the Seas, James Baines, Lightning, my own favorite Flying Cloud and others.

The talks were illustrated by lantern slides my that my father made himself, photographing a picture or a page, then printing the positive image onto a treated glass slide, framing it if need be, and covering it with a second slide. The slides were taped around the edges, with a blue dot at one corner. I knew that the dot had to be at the top-right corner, facing back, when the slide went into the lantern frame. Otherwise, the projected picture would be inverted or reversed. I knew this by the age of nine, because my job was to run the magic lantern while my father did his stuff.

In all my life, I've only been really expert in one thing--running the magic lantern. It seems a shame to let my incredible skill in this perhaps arcane field remain locked up. So I've decided to share my utter mastery of this black, hot, demonic device. I'll reveal how I made it produce the correct picture on the screen no more than a half-second after the snap of the signal, keep its focus needle-sharp,

avoid frying my fat little thumb or falling off my perch in the dark, and so earn pats on the head and murmurs of "What a clever boy!" as the clipper-ship lovers left the hall.

My father and I would arrive early for a lecture and set up the projector. I would seize a sturdy chair to stand on. My first big moment was getting the wooden box of lantern slides into position beside the lantern without dropping it. With the lantern focused, the wooden slide frame in place, the slides ready, my father would go to the podium and test the sound of the cricket, a little tin device, often shaped and painted like a frog. Holding it between thumb and forefinger, the lecturer would press the metal, and it would snap down and back with a small double crack. "Cricket!" it said.

People would start coming in and I would quietly mount my chair, proud that I was part of the show, not just an anonymous small boy in the crowd. There would be an introduction, applause, my father's opening remarks, then the first snap of the cricket. Presto! I snapped on the magic lantern, and the first picture hit the screen. And the poor lumper looking after the lights would finally locate the switch and douse them. He was never a pro--like me.

My father's familiar voice would begin telling the stories of the great ships. Then...<u>Cricket!</u> I would quietly push the slide holder through its frame, bringing slide number two onto the screen. Then I would deftly remove slide number one, tilt it against the back of the box, move my hand forward to touch the edge (not the middle) of the next slide, remove it and without changing its attitude, slip it into the empty holder. Simple.

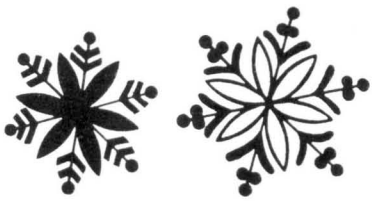
But there were dangers. Nothing is more embarrassing to the young magic lantern operator than showing the same slide twice. If, as sometimes happened, my father had added new pictures to his talk, and the box was too full, I'd have to pile the used slides atop one another outside the box. That could be pretty dicey. Nothing is more disasterous to a boy projectionist than accidently sending a pile of slides crashing to the floor.

My father was almost as good at his part of the show, I reluctantly admit, as I was at mine. Seldom did he get carried away by one slide and keep it on the screen too long. When he did, I would be ready--a handkerchief around my thumb to guard against the agonizing heat of the glass.

And so to the final "Thank you" from the podium. I would tactfully keep the last slide in place until the poor dolt who looked after the lights had rediscovered the switch. Then, feeling the joy of a successful production, I would modestly attend to the slides and the cooling lantern.

We always called it a magic lantern. And so it was, only very modern compared to its ancestors. The lantern magica appears in the 1600's, and not so long ago used oil lamps and hand-painted glass slides. Electricity was late to appear at public meetings. So even in the late 19th century, magic lanterns used limelight--a jet of hydrogen and oxygen hitting a rotating cylinder of calcium carbonate.

Occasionally the whole thing would explode. Nineteenth-century news items tell of windows being blown out of lecture halls. Obviously, they needed experts in those days. They needed <u>me</u>.



THE NORTHWEST SUMMER MEET

By Bob Bishop

Eleven members and one guest attended the summer meeting of the northwest Magic Lantern Society group. Bob & Carm Bishop hosted the afternoon event at their north Seattle home.

It was a fine afternoon for talk and examination of many aspects of the Bishop Collection. Two series of slides lent by the Museum of History and Industry were shown. They were reproductions of lantern slides depicting the Alaska Gold Rush of '98 and views of the Alaska Yukon Pacific Exhibition. Pot luck was the order of the day. The Cleveland Convention was discussed and it appeared as if Alice and Joe Koch would be the only northwest members present.

Susan and Jake Senink, friends of Ruth Hayes, our lively resident flip-book producer, announced their intention of joining the Society. The Seninks are both involved in the teaching of basic animation.

The next three meetings of the northwest group will be the Fall meeting at the home of Ray and Maggie Stark, the Spring meeting (to be held the same weekend as the Camera Collectors Society of Puget Sound Show) at the home of Joe and Alice Koch in Auburn, WA, and the Summer, 1985, picnic meeting to be held at Norm's Resort, an American Adventure Campground located at Cottage Lake, northeast of Seattle. It will be hosted by Bob and Carm Bishop.

The Summer meeting had a fine turnout despite conflicting Olympic TV coverage, Seafare, a Seattle civic celebration,and an Unlimited Hydroplane race all taking place the same weekend.

Apologies were received for non-attendance from Ray and Maggie Stark, Laddie Kite, and Mike and Evonne Sullivan, guests.

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A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

By Dick Balzer

Hopefully, this BULLETIN will arrive in time for me to wish all of you the healthiest and happiest of holiday seasons. This has been a good year for our Society. Our recent convention, although not big in terms of attendance, was a grand affair. The articles in the next edition of the BULLETIN will attest to the quality of the Convention. Many of us made new friends and everyone seemed to go away with new purchases and more knowledge of the lantern.

Financially, we are in good shape. We currently have a modest surplus in our treasury, due primarily to money made from the auction, and our accounts are being capably managed by Terry Borton. Our membership continues to grow and we now have more than 100 members. A new and complete listing of members and interests should be available in the next several months.

We continue to produce an impressive bulletin, one in which we can all take pride. Larry Rakow has continued the tradition of excellence so well started by Leora Wells.

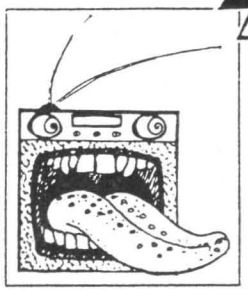
I have tried as Chairman to continue in the manner established by Joe and Alice Koch, and with the assistance of our two other officers and the continued active support of the membership, look forward to an even better year next year.

We hope to continue to generate interest in the magic lantern. We have discussed reproducing some 19th century US magic lantern journals as a major undertaking for the coming year and will keep you informed as to the progress of this project.

At the Convention, I proposed--and all in attendence agreed--that in an effort to continue as a strong society and assure ourselves a first-rate publication, we should raise the annual dues from $10 to $15. Before putting that policy in place I would like to solicit reaction from the total membership. Please write directly to me or to the editor if you have strong feelings about the increase, one way or the other.

Once again, I wish you all well and hope that Santa places yet another lantern under your tree.

flipbooks By RUTH HAYES

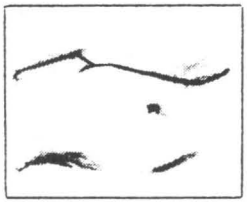


TV DINNER
A gluttonous video swallows a child whole. 36 pp., b/w, 3½" x 3¼", 1981, $3.50.

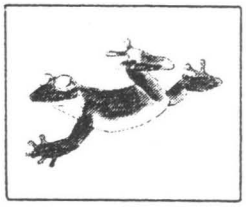
RON'S WORLD
The 40th President shows us that when the going gets tough, the small get eaten. 45 pp. 2 colors, 3½" x 3¼", 1984, $5.00. Available in May '84.

ORCA BREACHING
Motion study of *Orca orcinus*, a.k.a. killer whale – an intelligent animal which makes a big splash. Drawings by Ruth Hayes, published by Population Dynamics and The Whale Museum. 56 pp., b/w, 3½" x 5½", 1981, $4.00.

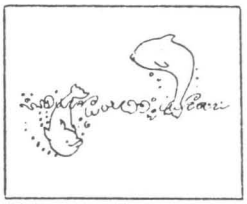
BODYSCAPE
Animated charcoal figure sketches suggest a rolling landscape. From the film "Body Sketches." 36 pp., b/w, 3½" x 3¼", 1979, $3.50.

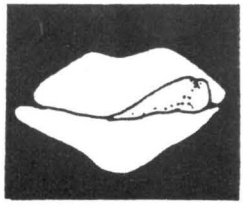


FROGS IN HEAT
Two cold blooded amphibians warm up to each other. 45 pp., 2 colors, 3½" x 3¼", 1983, $4.00.

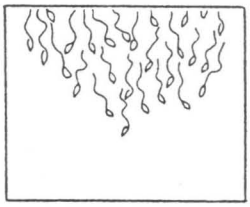


DOLPHIN CYCLE
A pair of frolicsome porpoises. 36 pp., b/w, 3½" x 3¼", 1980, $3.50.

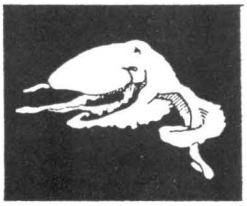




HOT LICKS
Moving study of a not too subtle tongue on pink paper. 48 pp., 3½" x 3¼", 1980, $3.50.



EGGCHASE
A chicken egg flees hordes of stampeding sperm. From the film "Eggs." 48 pp., b/w, 3½" x 3¼", 1979, $3.50.



RUNNING OCTOPUS
Motion study and natural history of this graceful animal. 48 pp., b/w, 3½" x 3¼", 1980, $3.50.

Send prepaid orders to Ruth Hayes, 4030 Eastern Ave. N., Seattle, WA, 98103. Please add .50 per book for First Class postage in North America. Add $1 for postage elsewhere.

NEW MEMBERS & CHANGES OF ADDRESS

W. Tebra
Terpmeent 33
1357HB Almere
THE NETHERLANDS

Jilliana Ranicar Breese
164 Kensington Park Road
London W11, ENGLAND
(Change of Address)

Ruth Hayes
4030 Eastern Ave. N.
Seattle, WA' 98103
(Change of Address)

Kenneth Anderson
432 Valencia Road
Venice, FL

Larry Yesner
516/579-7040
(New phone #)